MAKERS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

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SAHITYA AKADEMI
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TO UNCLE

SARWANAND RAINA

Contents

CHAPTER ONE

The Man

LAKSHMAN Pandit was a poor but pious Kashmiri Brahmin who lived in the heart of the city of Srinagar in a locality called Shehliteng—a silty bank of alluvium in an oxbow formation of the river Jhelum to its east—now close to the Habbakadal, the second bridge on this river. In a thatched hut the mother of Lakshman Pandit looked after her home. Lakshman Pandit had a son, Zinda (alive) born in August 1884. The father of Zinda Kaul was known for contentment and courage and his grandmother for simplicity and detachment. Zinda Kaul lost his mother at the age of three. The quiet disposition of Lakshman Pandit had deepened after his wife's death but he was determined to educate his motherless child at any cost. Thus began Zinda's life in an atmosphere of love, contentment and detachment. Zinda always wore a quiet smile on his lips.

There were no schools then but only *maktabs* where the teacher (*aukhun*) conducted classes in his own house. One of the earliest *maktabs* in Srinagar was that of Balak Kaul Jān where Zinda was admitted. His education began with the Persian script till he began the well-known first Persian lesson *Kareemā*. The boy was intelligent and hardworking.

An epidemic in the year A.D. 1892 brought death and devastation to Kashmir. It is no exaggeration to say that numberless houses were locked and the keys deposited in the nearby police stations. The death of Balak Kaul Jān brought the life of his *maktab* to an end. So the problem of Zinda's schooling came up. The private school of Pandit Damodhar in Gundi Ahlmar, not far from Shehliteng, had good reputation and Zinda now took up studies there under this able Persian scholar. In his spare time Zinda turned the pages of Persian manuscripts available there and the teacher entrusted him with the work of putting these in shape and form. One day Pandit Damodhar saw a line in Persian written in the exercise book of Zinda:

> O God! bless me with knowledge
> To know,
> The inner feelings of others.

The teacher scolded the boy and asked him not to attempt at versification. A prosaic teacher Damodhar disliked the attempt of the precocious boy who would take leaves from Persian manuscripts to his home and read verses. It appears that intellectual maturity had dawned early on Zinda who while talking to his teacher gave a surprise of his knowledge of idioms and vocabulary in Persian. It was here that the boy began to write in Urdu when his first poem brought him into prominence.

> What is that which gives joy
> And ends conflict.
> It is unity and cooperation
> Abundant in human heart.

Kashmir had come under the influence of Western education and English was introduced as a subject for study in the lower primary classes. Known for his sharp intelligence and devotion to studies Zinda was lucky to join the first

school where Lala Sita Ram, the Head Master, taught English. Soon then the teachers of Zinda Kaul were impressed with his enthusiasm and studious habits. They helped him with free text-books and exercise books.

It may be mentioned here that Zinda had to discontinue his education as his father arranged a private job for him on the Bund—the fashionable market of the foreigners. A photographer required the services of a man who could speak and write English. Here Zinda saw for himself the blessings of Western culture, punctuality, cleanliness and efficiency. What he liked most was the value of time. Throughout the day he read old newspapers in English. It dawned on him that he was wasting his life. After a good deal of thought he left his private job and joined his old school wherefrom he matriculated in 1902 with distinction. The then coveted job in the Accountant General's office, boastingly known as *Accootundi*, was given to him after a test in which he stood first. Thus Zinda Kaul became well known, Reading and writing of files in office was mental stagnation for him. An Englishman, Mr Moore, who was the principal of the first college in Srinagar, appointed him as a teacher and was impressed with his translations. Mr Moore called Zinda Kaul "a previously developed *jivātmā*" whose every attempt at translation was "infinitely better". In 1908, Zinda Kaul passed his Intermediate examination and in the year 1915 he was a graduate with English, Persian and History as his subjects.

Teaching interested him the most. A teacher, par excellence, Zinda Kaul left for Lahore to study for his degree of Bachelor of Teaching. Heat and harsh attitude of the principal there depressed his sensitive mind and he returned and took to teaching again at Srinagar till the year 1922 when he joined the Department of Archaeology. In this Department his contribution was substantial. It was during this period that he lost his dear wife when he exclaimed:

Who wouldn't die with her
But is man free to make his choice!

Seclusion suited this "previously developed *jivātmā*" most. He caged himself in a quiet room where every article of his had its place including the ink-pot in a dried mud lump on a sloping wooden desk on which he read, wrote and leaned. The loss of his eldest son drowned him in grief. His saddest songs flowed out of him then and he began to write poetry in Kashmiri for its ease of expression. The climax of the poet's state of mind is found in his well-known poem 'Vadihe Manush' (Man would weep!). The question of suffering and uncovering of new depth so admirably narrated by Professor J. L. Kaul in his translation of 'Vadihe Manush' is a subjective cry of pain by Zinda Kaul. Seldom has Kashmiri lyric risen to such ethereal heights where the mind has fathomed depths to be experienced by the heart in a state of helplessness. Brooding continued and the poet in Zinda Kaul woke up to pursue a search of the Infinite, the ultimate Reality which alone is bliss.

The evening of life for this holy man was sad and sullen. His days passed in consuming silence, wrapped in a coarse grey blanket he was all the time busy in reciting *Aum* in a low soft sound. Awake at dawn Zinda Kaul was fond of sitting in his bed erect and composed like the Buddha with his short soft hands, on his knees. No frown, no flutter, no speedy movement, as if time slowed down its speed impressed by his calm and tranquil posture. The gravity on his face could be perceived with that spiritual expression clear from a tranquil smile when in a serene contemplative mood. Without his own time-table for the day he loved to please those near him, unmindful of his own inconvenience. It was a passive existence numbed by domestic worries and responsibilities. The only help perhaps which Zinda Kaul readily accepted with gratitude was that of Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed, the then Prime Minister of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and

Pandit Tarachand Wazir, a gentleman par excellence.

It was an April dawn at Jammu on the bank of the river Tawi where Zinda Kaul lived with Sri T. C. Wazir. While pulling out a cleaning stick for teeth called *datan* out of wet clay in a shady place a deadly snake wrapped his arm. Undisturbed as he always was, Zinda Kaul moved a little more gently lest the snake's rest is disturbed. From his arm it found its way, or rather he laid it to rest on the sill as one would one's child. There were cries all around, but there Zinda Kaul sat in composure as usual unruffled and undisturbed, a sight for all to see and admire. The Sahitya Akademi award of Rs. 5,000 in the year 1956 for Kashmiri was awarded to Zinda Kaul when his genius in Kashmiri poetry came to be recognized.

Zinda Kaul's last days were gloomy. He had lost the will to live.

God was just an idea for him, personified in nature, the universe. Everything was sacred to him. The spirit in universe was joy. Suffering was no punishment but an experience for purification. Love was not the agitated fever of warm blood of youth which dies from kiss to kiss but something beyond satiety and the sphere of sorrow. Art and its appreciation could help in attaining love and thus pass from material to spiritual.

"Those who are no more do not go far away. Think of them and they are nearby," said Zinda Kaul.

"Was it *Rāg* or *Sanskar* that kept the spirit of the dead near the living?" I asked.

The answer was, "World is an idea and present becomes a dream for future."

Zinda Kaul believed that God's grace is ever present to help us. Grace is His divine support to man. Decent endeavour helps us to acquire all that is precious in life. God approves of all righteous actions and gives man His grace. The more we work sincerely and selflessly the more divinised we become. It is then that we see His hidden hand setting

right our effort and to realize that nothing happens except by His grace. Thus dies egotism and the light of truth shines in this dark world.

Generally poets have their own notions about the philosophy of life. In fact a devotional poet with mystic flavour in him and sometimes deeply philosophic is bound to have definite views of his own. After a good deal of questioning he came forth with his well-known verse from the 'Unprepared':

> Water a plant
> The moisture goes to the Earth.
> Love reaches Him
> From whom It emanates
> The wise who know the mystery
> Call this the secret of Love
> And so do I.

Pandit Zinda Kaul did not care to seek the company of the rich or those in exalted position. His mind alone was his kingdom in which he found all joy. Like the greatest Kashmiri poet in Persian, Mulla Mohammad Tahir Ghani, for whose Persian verse Zinda Kaul had great appeciation, he confined himself to his humble quiet home meditating on the Infinite!

Zinda Kaul had very little social contacts. Only a handful of people came close to him and enjoyed his company. He, therefore, developed a narrow sense of individualism. Silence reigned supreme in his company and for long one had to wait to hear Zinda Kaul. He it was who broke the silence first with the humorous remark. It appeared that he was in the habit of living in a state of timelessness unmindful of times. Dead to history, he however knew the ugly forces of superstitions, exploitation, immorality and pangs of the poor. It is seldom that he hinted at these.

Zinda Kaul's religious mood was never rigid or narrow. For him Unity of Existence was above any sort of dogma. Always humble, he cherished the company of the pious and wise. He attended *Bachnagma*—when a handsome bard sings

and dances to music in chorus. It was a gathering without tavern and wine leaving the audience to enjoy its own meaning of the song. Poetry was his choice. In his own words:

Poetry imparts new life
To sunken sentiments
Hali and Iqbal inspired
The sleepy souls of Hind
True poets serve God
It is difficult to attain their height.

There were some authors whose writings were liked by Zinda Kaul. He loved to hear readings from Emerson, Bhagwandas, Radhakrishnan, Aurobindo and Nehru. Having lost that will to live Zinda Kaul passed away in the year 1966 at Jammu.

CHAPTER TWO

Zinda Kaul—A Poet in Kashmiri

IT is as a poet in Kashmiri that the genius of Zinda Kaul may be seen at its best and can be appreciated. The Kashmiri verse of this saintly poet is not much in bulk. It consists of about fifty poems. A critical study of the poems reveals the fact that intrinsic quality of originality and profoundness makes Zinda Kaul shine above many other contemporary poets of his time.

Originally Zinda Kaul wrote in Urdu, Persian and Hindi, but he could not express himself with ease in any of these languages. It was his deep desire to penetrate the outer shell of the shadow-show of transient appearance into the vital presence within. It could only be possible through Kashmiri which was his mother tongue. It is true that some other well-known poets of Kashmiri began to write in Urdu but later reverted to Kashmiri. Mention may, in this regard, be made of the poeple's poet Ghulam Ahmad Mahjur (A.D. 1885-1952) who spent several years in India writing in Urdu but was finally advised by Maulana Shibli to write in Kashmiri. Another well-known poet Pandit Dina Nath Kaul 'Nadim' tried his hand at Urdu in the beginning but later rushed into his mother's lap.

Zinda Kaul came to the forefront as a poet in Kashmiri rather late in his life. He had made a searching study of Kashmiri poetry right from the time of Lalleshwari to his day. Devotional poetry interested him most. He had little idea of writing poetry in Kashmiri at that time.

"I never thought of turning out some sort of 'lolo'[1] myself, too, when I studied the Kashmiri poets," said he with a smile on his face.

Of all the poets in Kashmiri Parmānand (Nand Rām) made an appeal to him. His was a diction simple and blunt with that popular rhythm which is loved by the masses. In his own words, Parmānand's poetry was the devotional song of the people set in the mental and physical environment of Kashmir. For many years Parmānand's verse became a sort of routine study for Zinda Kaul wherever he went.

Zinda Kaul understood Parmānand, the devotional poet, whose dramatic language brings a sense of ecstasy to the reader. In those quiet corners of Kashmir Zinda Kaul spent days in company with this great poet some of whose poems he translated into English. It was during this period of his life that he imbibed a sense of loneliness in which seclusion suited him. Aloof from the din of life his mind began to realize the Great Love as a marvellous gift of God. As a result of this study and devotion Zinda Kaul was "moved" to write verse in Kashmiri.

The characteristics of his poetry were clarity and confidence. His diction was simple but serious in thought. Similes were apt and easy to understand. The reader was moved to dive deeper in meaning to realize the charm at the depth. It is not to be forgotten, therefore, that a mature mind well versed in diction and its niceties was expressing itself under divine pressure of spontaneous flow of pearl-like words. He had understood and felt the wine of love that sprouts forth in Lalla Vākyās. It was the divine cry of a saint and a seer for

1. A humble expression for his thoughtful verse.

unity. Besides her substantial contribution to Kashmiri through *yoga*, Lalleshwari experimented in reducing her entire being to a drop of bliss—the shivering *atma*, capable of expanding itself into, or evolving itself into human form with the waning of the moon.

The study of Parmānand impressed Zinda Kaul who translated into English this great nineteenth century devotional poet. The *Radhāsuyamvarā*, *Sudāmcharitā* and *Siva Laganā* are the three dramatic poems of myth woven with musical words used by this poet to emphasize the meaning of these lyrical narratives. These poems are mature and impressive in theme particularly in symbolic presentation of household objects like the implements used in peaceful agricultural operations of rural life where he lived and dived deep into himself. Deep in the soil and among the objects seen and felt by him everyday the symbols and similes took shape and it is his message of love and devotion which was translated faithfully by Zinda Kaul in his monosyllabic English.

It may also be mentioned that the early Kashmiri poems of Zinda Kaul are rich in material for thought and understanding. There is nothing that is to be termed as versification of a beginner. Maturity flows from the very start and depth continues steadily to deepen towards the understanding of Great Love, that is God.

In the twentieth century Pandit Zinda Kaul figures prominently as a poet in Kashmiri true to the unworldly tradition of spiritualism. The tradition of saintliness continues throughout his verse helping the reader to move further and away from the gross and the coarse. In this respect, perhaps, Zinda Kaul is a remarkable exponent in this line of poets, who adopted spiritual tradition of Kashmiri poetry. Mention may, however, be made of Krishna Razdan (*d.* 1925) known for his *lila* songs of devotion. So also Samad Mir (*d.* 1959) and Ahad Zargar, a living poet. Though essentially mystics, these popular poets filled the valley of Kashmir with their appealing ideas, musical rhetoric and detached description of low, selfish

nature waiting to be dissolved and transmuted into Love by Him who is the Supreme alchemist.

Zinda Kaul (1884-1966), known as "Masterji", for he spent his precious life in teaching, one way or the other, came to prominence when his divine songs began to be sung by men and women. A change had come in the use of indigenous musical instruments of Kashmir like *Tumbaknar*, earthen water-pot, metallic water-pot, brass cups, Sāz, Santoor, and other indigenous instruments. The harmonium had entered the arena of musical prayer, and *Rās lilā*—a drama dance arranged by some lovers of art who had travelled all the way to the Punjab and U.P. where *Rās Mandal* was a common religious performance of devotees to Lord Krishna. The harmonium, an easy instrument to play, was a boon to some of the zealous lovers of Kashmiri who sang the divine *Bhajan* including the *Lalla vākyās* accompanied with music. Other poems in Kashmiri were sung in chorus in the countryside where the local village poet, known as *gunmāt*, or the bard, was held in esteem. The single string indigenous *choncha* (primitive form of a sitār) was played and Kashmiri songs were listened to with rapt attention, as also *Rov* in which womenfolk with arms round one another's waist step on in a line and sing the first line of the couplet to be completed by the opposite in which the refrain is musical. In fact some poets played their own musical instruments while singing their songs to enter that sublime state of ecstasy where false fetters of reason and social decorum disappear. Parmānand (Nand Ram, A.D. 1791-1885) may be taken as one of these original devotional songsters. Be it stated here that in case the poet was unable to supply music to his songs he or she delighted in listening to his or her verse accompanied with music. This practice of singing the poetry of a person in his or her presence is common even today in Kashmir. Parmānand passed away in 1885. As if to keep the continuity of Parmānand's verse nature filled the gap by giving birth to Zinda Kaul.

Zinda Kaul's poems are all shorter poems. There is no

longer poem as such. These shorter poems are songs or hymns in praise of Great Love, God, *Lol dayas Prārthanā* (Hymn to Love). There is no praise or pathos in these poems. The language is saturated with love emotionally unfolding the heart and senses in the supreme joy of worshipping God. There is no story as such but an experience of the conscious mind to help and grow love. The attempt is to minimise the illusion of life and forms and aim 'at-one-ment', so aptly written by the poet himself. The lines given below show the preparation of the mind, the heart, and the senses for prayer:

Great Love
I know no God but Thee,
Raise me with Thine Power
And make my heart thy shrine.
Distance drowns me in grief
As the ideal is far away
Tired to search it in hill and dale
Come dwell in my heart.

There are references in his verse here and there to the *Rāmāyanā* and *Mahābhārata*. Helplessness comes in often. Rituals interest him not as these create a mist of ununderstanding and a sort of confusion in the minds of men. To him, it appears that rust has grown in its thinking dimming the light of the path to that real source of joy. Priests and rituals have shortened the vast, free span of the flow of love in life and these narrow banks have gathered impurities.

Make me drink at the source
Clean, calm and fresh
And not from narrow ugly streams,
Bounded by priests and books.

The Vedāntin and the Kashmiri Shaivite in Zinda Kaul are alive to the manifestation for amusement of the King

(*Ātmā*). The pure spirit comes (permit me to use the word) down into space, time and matter to dance with joy. Is it to stage a drama of divine prowess which wrestles with Maya—his opponent in play? A curious interplay of spirit and matter, life and death, light and darkness, in the scheme of opposites. The poem *Yor Āmut Gindnay* (He Manifests Himself for Amusement) is a dramatic and picturesque poem. The reference to Jawaharlal Nehru with pun on the word *Jawahir*, the gem, who, of his own choice, accepted imprisonment is also found in it. The author remembers how the late Pandit Zinda Kaul while explaining the meaning of a verse in "Sangrahe-entotrā" of Abhinavagupta ("Ever filled with joy he has no fear") mentioned Jawaharlal as a symbol confirmed by no less a brilliant opponent of his than Sir Winston Churchill who introduced Nehru as one who had conquered hate and fear. After the death of Jawaharlal Nehru, Zinda Kaul wrote:

He is beyond space
And by his own will
Accepted imprisonment
For the sake of his country
"Jawahar" the jem
Always active
And never still
Out to fight evil
And conquer fear
With kind deeds
Spreading fragrance
Like Jasmine and Sandalwood
See him in opposite
But as One
Spirit and matter
Light and darkness
Life and death
He is the same
Buddha, Shankara, Tagore
Come to life again
To amuse himself.

Perhaps, the finest prayer song deeply devotional is "He will Arrive Today". Its diction is simple and flow so rapt that one is bound to read it in one breath. Though without a refrain, the reader with a musical ear and understanding is bound to dot its verses with the first two lines:

> Today I hear my *Guru* will arrive
> I shall cover his path with flowers.

It is not easy to interpret or even to enjoy the rapture that this lyrical poem has in its original form. Of the thirteen couplets which are like pearls in the necklace of this beautifully emotional prayer—characterised with the personal touch—it could be sung, with the first couplet as its refrain. What is more the last line of each couplet is sung, without the first line, creating a deep impression of its depth and imagery. Devotion apart, the words in articulation create a music of their own to heighten its divine effect. The poet was fond of listening to this musical song in silence when one could see tears in his eyes and a sweet soft smile playing on his lips. The tape of this song was played every evening in a semi-dark corner of a room at Jammu where he sat like a god in silence. There he sat with eyes shut, his soft hands open on his knees, in a posture erect and dignified, calm and quiet like the Buddha impressing one with his peaceful composure that befits a yogi. I told him that a great genius and renowned atheist Maxim Gorki of Russia kept waiting for hours and did not disturb Leo Tolstoy who was watching the vast ocean in silence. And when Gorki followed the Count to his residence the Count told him:

> "O Maxim, will you never believe in God."
> "No, Count," said Maxim.
> After a little while the Count said to him, "Maxim, why didn't you disturb me in my silence at the shore."
> "I gazed at you, O Count, you looked like God."

Zinda Kaul opened his eyes and said: "Gautam Buddha said to Ananda, his disciple, 'I am no God. Look I suffer like others.' "

With his imagination and experience, Zinda Kaul enriched the poetic tradition in Kashmiri. He expressed his thoughts in simple words.

Contemporary poets did not influence Zinda Kaul much. His dominion of thought was inward in search of the Infinite.

Zinda Kaul does not seek God through the human beloved to acquire the nature of the Absolute. As such there is no Majnun or Farhād in his poetry. The poet suddenly jumps at the symbolism above to realize the Absolute. No penance is required to invite Him. He is ever ready. Only He was to be invited (are we prepared to receive Him?). In his thoughtful poem 'Unpreparedness', the poet pleads thus:

Abashed, unclean
I dare not receive Him;
My heart is full of cares
To seat him with dignity.

Ever ready to come
His love for me is there
My unpreparedness stands in the way
Oh my eternal lover.

I forget him at times but not He
His correspondence is regular
Through flowers, birds and bees
Lakes, streams and skies.

Zinda Kaul explains the riddle of life as a contract between the man and his Maker. In his verse the poet pins down a dialogue between the Mortal and the Immortal towards an understanding. He explains it in simple words. It is believed that God ordained man thus:

Live in the world
With burning desire to see Me
Separated thus flowers will bloom in your heart
Give these to your neighbours
Leaving your welfare to Me.

In Kashmiri the poet's beloved is not woman but man. His form is described with all charm and the setting is a garden, a hill or a beautiful scene. But not so with Zinda Kaul whose setting is a humble home where matter and objective beauty fade into nothingness.

Essentially a seeker of truth, Zinda Kaul derived little pleasure from his surroundings. For him with eyes shut, as it were, there was no communication with the outside world, and, therefore, little interest in improving the social order. Either the decadence was beyond cure, or, the immediate need was to bring about a change in heart with some unseen power to which he prays in his verse:

Let philosopher's stone turn
Everything into gold
A miserable being
A perpetual contemplation of the beloved
Destined to suffer
Be nobody's ornament or else
Nothing will ever improve.

New meaning is given by Zinda Kaul to his verse. His poetry is, therefore, a questionnaire of spiritual urges of his time when Kashmiri poetry was coming out of the vestments of inward quest, to put on refreshing impulses of the outer world with its challenges and hopes. These far-reaching influences found mention in Zinda Kaul's poetry. The mood is termed religious which really it is not. At best it is deeply philosophic. At no stage does the beloved appear so that the lover would surrender. Nothing of the sort. Even God is faced with humble dignity. The poet craves for a ray of

Knowledge, or divine wisdom which could serve him as a touchstone for testing want and desire, good and bad. He dreaded the short-lived life of all that was sweet, beautiful and kind, be it a breeze, a flower or human joy. Its transitory nature upsets him.

Change of season with its beautiful colours in flowers and trees when the landscape in Kashmir smiles with divine joy moved the poet who wrote some small poems describing nature. Of these 'Snowfall' and 'Spring' may be mentioned here. Here too the poet is symbolic.

The snowfall is a divine, a windfall, a gift visitation meant to cover ugly and dirty things on the land with a clean white sheet of soft snow. All things high and low, are covered thus, signifying that the garment is the same though at places it is a little raised or lowered. Homogeneity prevails with this white cover of morality making birth and death, without and within, stranger and kinsman one in spirit.

In the beautiful poem 'Spring' the poet invites man to join the joy of the Creator exhibited in the willow grove, the bank of the brook, the thick turf, the spring breeze, the singing birds, the rosy beauty of sprouting buds, the humble undergrowth of narcissus and tulips enjoying the musical song of creation with the blue sky above like a roof of sapphire:

> What else is heaven
> If not this
> Only if you know
> To become one with Nature.
> Wilderness has its charm
> Of freedom and unfettered growth
> Await you with jasmine blossoms.
> The beloved is uninvited come.

In fact the poet could describe nature in its details and make it the vehicle for expressing his ideas but his domain, as has already been described, was inward in that sea of silence

where human relations and desires born of the senses sink into nothingness. The state of detachment prevails there. The poet, however, uses apt metaphors and similes from Nature to make himself intelligible.

At times Nature inspired the poet's mood. He had a rural mind one with nature. He did not treat it as only a background to human life. Nature figures prominently in Zinda Kaul's poetry. Objects of Nature have a divine meaning for him. Hills, trees, flowers and streams convey a personal message from eternity. As with Rabindranath Tagore when in Kashmir (1915) he wrote:

> Beneath the banks of the darkening hills
> stood row on row of deodars.
> Creation seemed to seek self-utterance in a dream,
> Unable to make her speech plain.

Tired of urban life and its ugliness, the poet wants to run away to the countryside. Robbery and loot by the powerful result in exploiting the poor. The only way is to run away and never to return. The game of exploitation is in progress and men in power look like cruel, bloated spiders with their webs to trap the poor. Disgusted with this state of affairs when man is crushed to dust by power, the poet has his own dream of a perfect society—Utopian though!

> Robbery is not in league with loot
> The poor not crushed
> And Adam not a servant destitute
> Where animals get protection
> And the richman's feast is bloodless
> Where food is in abundance
> With gram, fruit and milk
> Where people read, sing and play
> Where children weep not
> And daughter-in-law is like a daughter
> Brought up like a son

And no one deformed, and depressed
But contented, and calm
Remembering God with love and prayer.
In the city of peace and love
Shall Man attain spiritual heights.

Among Zinda Kaul's poems 'Helplessness', according to some, is the masterpiece of his style and diction. If the sweetest song should express the saddest thought, then this poem is the masterpiece of his depth of feeling and search which makes it a soliloquy interrogating and wandering for an answer which is not easy to find. The discussed theme of beauty and love has been given a new meaning by this saintly poet whose deep meditative mind engulfs itself in a long prayer of penance. It is in this poem with depth of feeling that Zinda Kaul makes a remarkable contribution to Kashmiri literature. This superb poem is a vague vision, or bemoaning bewilderment, a helplessness, a fascination, a fancy, a suffering from separation, a self-imposed disease, a weeping cry, a morbid impulse to complain. Some of the finest *ghazals* in Kashmiri have been written by this poet. These *ghazals* make a wonderful meaning which in thought and diction excel other such poems and flight of imagination of this poet spring from the deep of soul to the ethereal heights. Such a span of vastness in imagination is not generally to be found in other poets. Some critics have often hinted at Zinda Kaul's theme as being orthodox and conservative. But here is how Mahjur describes Masterji as a poet:

Let my song rise high
And attain the hue of sky
Let tumult of grief
And long live Zinda Kaul.

The poet thus creates the atmosphere of an uncertain mood to fathom the depth of imagination and soul. The poem is an urge to stimulate this type of thinking (interrogative) generally

found in the Upanishads where seekers of truth approach their masters for knowledge and wisdom. The poet was justified in his claim that a new meaning was added to the Kashmiri language with this poem written in a deep pessimistic mood with a subtle shadow of complaint against the Creator. The words are so woven that the meaning suddenly twists itself away from the approach of an atheist.

In his own humble way Zinda Kaul guarded his selflessness. At no cost would he compromise his dignity for riches or favours. Men of substance and authority who would readily help him for the mere asking were never approached. Zinda Kaul says:

iends I have
Whom God gave enough and to spare
Offerings they made of their own
But the poet accepted not a shell.
Music I love,
It is my art,
My religion and my world,
As the heart bands the world too
As sages say.
he heart is a precious jewel
God-absorbed and God-intoxicated.

Zinda Kaul fashioned his vocabulary to suit his expression by using words from Sanskrit and Persian. In this respect, too, Zinda Kaul achieved something unique, a melody of mingling words.

Zinda Kaul wrote some quatrains too. These are instructive and thought-provoking. The central theme is the quest of the soul to seek 'Truth-Goodness-Beauty'. Religion may help but the path is long and may need cycles of birth and death. The shortest way is to annihilate the ego, the first person singular. Perhaps, the finest quatrain is the one in which the poet looks on his heart glowing with fire after meditating on the red-tulip-like beauty.

I meditated on my red-tulip-like beauty;
the 'dark forest' began to glow.
The fire burnt up my harvest.
It spread in a wink.
The Heart took fire, all the (neighbours) inside
became hot, and there arose a cry of alarm,
'Fire! Fire!'

This then is the bird's-eye view of Zinda Kaul's Kashmiri poetry from the early years of his life to his end in 1966.

Let us summarise some of the characteristics of the poetic tradition which Zinda Kaul represents. In the line of saintly poets Zinda Kaul sticks to the saintly tradition of his land. The fusion of cultures took place in Kashmir where the Vedic Hinduism formed the intellectual basis of thinking, peaceful and progressive. It was tinted with the teachings of Gautama. This doctrine of Law of Piety with the ultimate goal of salvation (*Nirvānā*) heeded not the dogma that developed in course of time but in peaceful and soothing environment evolved the indigenous Shaiva philosophy, in which giant intellects like Abhinavagupta, Utpala and Somananda propounded the doctrine of Self-Recognition. The substance of this indigenous philosophy is contained in the divine song known "Sangraheenstotra". This divine poem by Abhinavagupta is the very marrow of the mystic philosophy of Kashmir identifying a human-bound soul with the Infinite in its joy of existence. As time passed it was natural that philosophers with solitude of this land, where the Buddhism suffered its first transformation to get out of the rust of dogma and conventions into which the Hinayana faith had degenerated itself, should have propounded a new philosophy. Not so much as its intrinsic rigid code of conduct for the *Bhikshus* but the inability of adaptation with the changing times that the Mahayana Buddhism came into existence under the philosopher-scientist Nagarajuna, Asvaghosha and others. Asvaghosha is also credited with the enunciation of the first principles of Relativity. These giant intellects like Nagarjuna,

Åsvaghosha and others brought the new form of the Buddhism close to the subtle frontier of the Hindu cult so that the worship of the Buddha as an *Avtar* found its way into the Hindu Pantheon.

Without going into the views expressed by various linguistic scholars regarding the origin of Kashmiri the fact remains that by the middle of the fourteenth century the poetic art-form of *vāākh* (Sanskrit vākyā), a four-line stanza, had come into vogue. It is not the place to mention here how Yogeshwari Lalla improved the *vāākh* and brought it to a standard of composite metric form.

History began to move fast in this isolated vale of the Himalayas where a strong linguistic influence came like a flood from the Arabic and Persian lands with the visitation of mystic saints like Shah Hamdān who migrated with 700 Sayyid disciples to this beautiful land in A.D. 1372. Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadāni was a great scholar and author who was a poet too. He wrote in Persian and Arabic on religion, ethics, politics, mysticism and physiognomy.

It was in the time of Lalleshwari that Islam entered Kashmir. The socio-cultural life of this land was in a critical stage. Yogeshwari Lalla is remembered for having interpreted the profound Shaiva philosophy and also for giving to Kashmir her native tongue and made it a written language. What the original form of the *Prākrit* and *Apabrahmsha* was, it is difficult to say, but soon after mass conversion to Islam began under Sikandar, the iconoclast, the Persian language became dominated and the native tongue got saturated with Persian words. There were, however, certain powerful factors which made Kashmir to survive the storm of this kind of invasion.

1. The Persian language had, like Sanskrit, a rich philosophic basis, perfect and sublime.
2. The Kashmiri had a substratum of Sanskrit words which did not suffer change.
3. The approach to problems of the soul and God was identical and there was no conflict of views. It also in-

cluded the mystical approach to religion.

4. The softening attitude of the harmonious symphony of natural landscape in Kashmir.

According to Zinda Kaul the human mind has its own quest and eternal craving. The scent of the Lord drags it out in search for it. It reveals itself through the Universe. In one form or the other it sprouts forth like a bud. By nature or by instinct the moth runs willingly to the candle-flame with open wings, the ultimate result! It transcends the domain of reason. Whatever the influence of outsiders in Kashmir, history has it that right from the days of Sage Kashyapa peaceful worship of the Ultimate Reality developed to its finest form in ancient times. Even before the time of the sage Laugakhsh when Karmakānd took a formal and, therefore, rigid form of Vedic worship the Sharda script was in vogue and manuscripts were written on the birch bark of trees. The *Nilmatpurāna* with its historical significance as a source of ancient history bears testimony to this fact.

The later Vedic period also saw Kashmir engaged in deep meditative activity which resulted in a substantial contribution to philosophic knowledge.

The pious master minds like Shaikh Noor-ud-Din Wali of Tsrār-i-Sharif, the patron saint of Kashmir and a contemporary of Yogeshwari Lalla, brought in an influence of ease and understanding in life. The Muslim saints of Kashmir assumed the title of *Rishis*, propagating tolerance and respect for different modes of worship by people. Like the *Vākyās* of Yogeshwari Lalla, the sayings of Noor-ud-Din (Nund Rishi) became household terms influencing the minds of people.

Persian language and literature attracted Kashmiri intellect. The form, style, idiom and expression of this rich language fascinated the indigenous talent of this beautiful land. It was in the early Muslim rule of Shahmiri Dynasty that Sultan Shihabuddin (1354-1373) established a college for the study of Persian and Arabic. Till the year 1586, when the Chaks ruled Kashmir, Persian had established itself as official

language.

What is more Kashmiris had begun to contribute to this language. Sultan Zainulabdin (1420-1470) encouraged scholars in Sanskrit like Mulla Hafiz of Baghdad, Mulla Passa of Bokhara, Qazi Jamal-ud-Din, Rashidi and Mulla Ahmad Kashmiri who were profound scholars and poets.

Of the Hindu scholars mention may be made of Yodha Bhatta, Jona Raja, Shrivar, Tilaka Ācharya (Buddhist), Shiv Bhatta, Karpura Bhatta who were patronized by the Sultan. In such an atmosphere of unique popularity when the liberal policy of the Sultan was above caste, creed and religion it was but natural that Kashmiri language enriched itself with Persian words. Mysticism was the logical outcome of this mingling in a peaceful atmosphere of freedom of expression and common ethical precepts. The mystic tradition in poetry became characteristic of an elevated mind above distinctions of religion. The unity of existence pervaded through all thinking. Persian poetry of Mulla Mohammad Tahir Ghani may be mentioned here as the most remarkable achievement of the genius of Kashmir in the Persian language which gave recognition to this land for its flight of imagination. The cultural history of Kashmir could boast of such a contribution as it attracted the poet-laureate of Persia, Sāib, to come all the way to Kashmir to see and converse with Mulla Mohammad Tahir Ghani Kashmiri.

History played its role in uniting the people of this isolated mountain-land where rigours of severe climate in winter may have been a factor to bring people closer. Poetic tradition evolved its own symbols the main being that of Lol (love). According to Zinda Kaul:

> Whomsoever you love
> You love God
> This is my faith
> This is my philosophy.

Whatever the form, 'Lol', as already mentioned, pervades through all his poetry. It is the only means to realize the ultimate Reality.

In the nineteenth century, however, this tradition faded as the renaissance let loose a flood of emotions and aspirations which gave rise to a poetic form called the *masnavi*.

Zinda Kaul was not interested in *masnavi* form of poetry. Romanticism as such did not suit his imagination being mostly the translations and adaptations of Persian *masnavi*.

Kashmir was no more isolated and influences from other lands and a study of their language opened a new vista of poetic form, metre and adaptation. Love, adventure and war entered into poetry and descriptive narration became common. (Sacred and profane love where the sacred is seen through the profane as "light through a prism and the profane is seen through the sacred as God's light in the nature of man.")

Steadily Persian dominated the Kashmiri and originality was lost. But the tradition did not die. Parmānand (Nand Ram, 1791-1885) flooded the countryside with his *lila* lyrics. His verse is all symbolic keeping up with the tradition.

After Parmānand Zinda Kaul kept alive the poetic tradition in Kashmiri. He did not falter from the path of meditative thought in which he probed deeper every day that passed. His superb *ghazals* represent this tradition. The theme is so popular and attractive that it requires no mental exertion to understand it. The reading is easy and musical, and, therefore, pleasing to the ear. But what makes it remarkable is that the deeper we go in its understanding the more it unfolds itself. Zinda Kaul's *ghazals* show a spontaneity of expression in which the substance is presented in the word form which is natural. There is hardly any artificiality of expression in his *ghazals*.

Nand Ram died in 1885 and Zinda Kaul was born a year earlier in the year 1884 to uphold the traditions of Kashmiri poetry. The lamp of light, deeper light, keeps burning, thus attempting at the search of the Infinite. This

quest never ceases. It may, however, shine like a bright star at times when the flood of light keeps a populace out of darkness. When clouded the source of light is screened off for some time but on the distant horizon a solitary source of light appears like the morning star. Mahjur, the most popular poet of the present times, remarked that there were two categories of poets—the real and the unreal, gold and glitter. With the passing of time *Gul-bulbul* poetry will be regarded as only versification at its best though melodious and popular. But this immediate appeal is no guarantee of its intrinsic richness. "With the coming of Abdul Ahad Azad," said Mahjur, "revolutionary verse is going ahead of *Gul-bulbul*. This race of one phase or the other dominating the scene will continue but the real substratum was the quest of the self. It was this type of poetry which ultimately gives man peace and leads to bliss."

The Urdu and Persian poems of Zinda Kaul appeared in a booklet entitled the *Deewan-i-Sabit*, containing seventy-two poems in Urdu and ten in Persian. Being first a saint and then a poet Zinda Kaul uses his verse as a vehicle for expressing ideas of God, life and suffering. His song is a prayer:

Thou art the knowledge of the seekers,
Thou art the trance of mystics,
Thou *Brahm*, thou *Yazdan*;
Life and Light of the world.

Bewildered and lost in ignorance his mood is uncertain. He craves for salvation. Unmindful of worldly riches he prays for selfless devotion.

His diction is simple and chaste. According to Zinda Kaul, detachment alone will lead to expulsion of ego in man.

Humour sticks to the poet and the climax is seen in his poem, 'Clerkee':

Milk, butter and fruit—

We like not, knowingly though
But feast on forced content
A cup of potatoes and peas.

In his Urdu verse scenic beauty of Kashmir is described imparting to it the divine touch of detachment and search of truth. According to 'Josh' the language of Zinda Kaul has too much of "regional and local colour" thus meant for domestic consumption.

The Hindi poems of Zinda Kaul appeared in a booklet entitled *Patra Pushpa*. These are private thoughts of the poet describing human soul with its king the lower "I" in the form of the tyrant Kansa. His queen is "My-ness". Faith is Radha and Love is Shri Krishna. The flute transforms life and the faculties of mind like love of nature, patriotism, heroism, fellow-feeling, poetry, art and all good qualities come to life as if by a miracle. Such is the power of love. Ultimately low, selfish nature is dethroned, dissolved and transmuted into Love. The joy of literature makes people rejoice and work in cooperation and harmony with Love. Emphasis is on Love, the source of bliss.

A little poem on 'Brotherhood' brings man close to a song-bird who freely moves from tree to tree, twig to twig and flower singing the praise of Father. The Mother is God's Creative Will. Thus Miss Sound of Space, Miss Ripplet of Water, Miss Ray of Sun, Miss Wavelet of Air, Miss Moonlight, Miss Flame, Miss Music of Forest, Miss Coolness of Clouds, Miss Flower-branch and Miss Antelope-glance are all sisters to the poet. They all join singing holy hymns.

Thus it can be said that the Hindi verses are at best devotional songs with very little that could be termed poetry as such.

Translations

A selection of some of the poems written by the late Pandit Zinda Kaul has been made for translation into English. The choice has not been in the popular verse of the poet but what is generally admired for its thought-content and imagery. It is, however, true that some of the poems are those that were liked by the poet himself for their deep sentiments and thoughts and a state of helplessness.

These translations need be read with care. His *ghazal* is a succession of couplets, independent and free. This increases the beauty of his verse and the similes chosen with aptness impart the force of imagery to his style. Often enough the couplet comes forth to explain a situation, to understand a mood, and to take heart in moods of depression. The translations, however, lack the flavour of the original though an attempt to retain the spirit of the original has been made to the extent possible.

Gems in Wilderness

With love-sick heart
Surrounded by fire
Wandering restlessly
Eyes shut, I mused
And found myself in the garden of Love.
There it was blissful sleep
After a fatigue joining under scorching sun
As if under a shady *chinār*
But saw the man
Formless in name and form
Or a sunburnt body
Plunging in cool Sind[1] water
A maiden of *Braja*
Entering a *rāsā*[2] ring to realize
The joy of consciousness
Perceived marvellous freedom
In that bondage
Outside numerous chains
And falsely free
The wasted youth
But the liveliness of childhood
A true vision it was
Of communion with hearts
Bound by love with eyes shut
Had heard of God.

1. A stream of cold water to the west of Srinagar.
2. Reference to Krishna's (*rās*) dance.

Shepherd's Cry

Where is my love gone?
I am alone in this dense forest
And the night is cloudy and dark
I fall at every step
Lo! I hear the flute
O thunder. Wait a while
That I could see
the footprint of my love
He is the support of sinners too
And his voice is the *Gitā*
I know no penance, no meditation
But pine for him and him alone.
Day and night
He smiled and played with me
But that was long ago
Though he is near my heart
You will not tell me where he is
Committed as you are
But break your promise
And do bear the sin of it.
Radha's love took him away from me
But he should have returned with her
Knowing that he is my life
And his separation death.
Tell him
My last breath was
"Where is my Kanhya[1] gone?"
This he may know.

1. Lord Krishna.

He will arrive Today

My father-*guru*, I learn,
Will arrive today.
Shall cover his path with flowers
And clean my mind
Of sorrows and sins.
A seat of honour for him.
In my prayer-room shall be.
Fill for him cups of juice
From fruits of my good action.
I wash his feet with my tears
Holding them upon my heart
And narrate my troubles and sorrows
Will make him remember
How he fondled me in arms as a child.
My open heart will show him
The depth, reverence and love
My love will bubble up in his heart
Like a fresh spring of water
With my head at his feet
Shall entrust him all I have
My 'name' and 'form' will wax before him
Like the Moon in the dark fortnight.
Thus will sink my lower ego
In the higher self of the sun.

To Mahjur

A heap of dust
God turned into a flower.
And drops of water into pearls
With his further kindlier touch
From roses, birds and animals
Came man to life.
With a balanced head and heart
The wisest and the best,
To aspire higher and higher
Like a creeper round a tree
This human heart
A bubble in the ocean of his love
Storing a storm of feelings and impulses
The one who serves religion for desire
Builds a mosque and makes a shop of it
He passes well who serves his term
With no complaint or sorrow
Avoiding the subtle hair-split intelligence.
The enlightened heart is full of awe
And eyes lack expression
But Kashmiri is proud of Mahjur
A sound-hearted poet
Who made the lyrical verse
A sweet wine
And the book of his verses
A beautiful tavern
Thus I withdrew to sell
My home-made liquor
And wine bibber thanked me
For closing the small shop.

Go Home

Go home, no joy in flowers,
My heart likes not the spotted ones.
The broken heart with its pieces
Returned but not reunited,
The sorrow of love got still up in stars
As if with sad music.
This way or that come
The end would come once for all
No good to exist
In a restless state of mind
In Kashmir too
The heat of pain in heart continued
Even in shady *chinars*, meadows and brooks
The mind was unclean
And the inkling got blurred
The lamp of wisdom is extinguished
In dark caves
In the lane of my beloved
If my life-dust were to blow
And least it would accompany
Those who freely go there
Some day the picture will be out
Complete or broken
Strange is the movement of stars this year
In my fate.

Is This Right?

Resolved to give me something
You withdrew your hand
And made fun of me
What an insult!
Is this right, my love?
Having led me
By unknown paths
You left me in the middle
Bewildered and lost
Is this good, my cruel love?
Flowers of hope
Grew upon my heart
You made them bloom
And wantonly uprooted these
Is this right, my love?

Idealism

My precious beloved,
We are in love.
Forgive my faults
When I present my pearl-like tears.
Your devoted servant am I
With a pat on my back
I comb thy hair.

I found my tavern,
In your eyes, the cups of wine
And drink to my capacity.
The dream of knowledge
Was better than the waking
It makes one a king
The poets, painters, sculptors
Lovers become *farhads* and *majnuns*
Lending charm to candles by burning the moth.

Epilogue

The beloved listens or not
I address him for it gives me relief
In proximity of saffron land
I own a vegetable shop
Hoping that a customer may
Flavour my vegetables with saffron.

In Praise of Love

Love is the root of joys,
Know this, my heart; thou still, dear,

Love is the source of bliss!
To one in love its bitter taste
As sweet as honey dew
The trident of the Lord of Death
Is welcome as the charming flute
Of Krishna, Lord of Love—
Love is the seed of bliss!
To one in love harsh words are like
The words of honour sweet;
Love's bondage is but Freedom's arms
That hold him fast in fond embrace
The dust of his beloved's feet
Is *soorma*[1] for his weary eyes,
And *sandal* for his burning brow
Love is the cause of bliss!
In straits the lover is quite blithe
He sings while on the gallows placed;
At death's approach he calmly smiles,
As roses at the end of spring
Love is the fount of bliss!
My silly dear, learn this.

Ferryman, Lead Me and My Countrymen[2]

I long to go
Where all have a living faith in God—
One, Loving Father, Lord of all—
Where ghosts, genii and spirits dark
Hold no sway over men's minds;

1. Antimony
2. Translated by Sri J.L. Kaul

Where love, service and charity
  Is the simple and supreme rule of life;
Where Lands are vast and all have room to live;
Where food and fruit and milk abundant
And all the good things of life are shared by all;
Where all have enough to eat, and none too much;
Where none covet and steal their neighbour's goods,
None beg, none dispute, none envy;
Where all have work to do and none are idle,
And those who work have time
  For play and study, song and fun,
Where all are happy, and children do not cry;
Where women are respected as goddesses divine
Where daughters are loved as dearly as the sons
Where none is a widow;
Where disease and ugliness and evil ways of life
  Do not stunt and warp the growth of men;
Where wars are unknown, and the skies serene
  Do not rain down poison gas and savage death;
Where dwellings are clean and gardens lovely;
Where none suffer from want and fear;
To that City Beautiful,
Ferryman, lead me and my countrymen!

Cannot weep

No peace, no leisure
No zest to search
  The Friend.

Know not to lose my life
In search of Real life
Know not how
To wash my sorrow
Out of my heart
I only weep
That no tears come out
Even in such a plight.

To the Teacher

With distracted mind and decrepit body
How shall I strive for salvation?
If pain is the punishment of sin
Then I bear His yoke.
I see the innocent
In anguish and pain
So question Thy justice, my Lord?
Happiness comes sometimes
But fades in a twinkle.
From Thy boundless ocean of bliss
Not even a drop for us mortals?
The world to you is based on morality
A manifestation of bliss.
But the problem of pain and evil
Is still unsolved?
Our wisdom is no wisdom
Compared with your intuition.

My Diwali

Illumination on the Earth
And on the sky too.
Imagination in flight
The goddess is to come
A sweetmeat seller
Exhibiting the skill in art
A singer
Singing his sweetest songs
Light has entered in hearts
And all light is attracted as if by the North pole.
A mystic there
  whose flood of imagination
  concentrated itself into thunder
A perfect one
Has burnt his deeds (*karma*)
In a pious pyre.
This thus remains
The hut of my heart
Dusty and dilapidated.
Clear from the light
of the hill
That the goddess of darkness
is the divine Mother *Kali*.
How strange it is
That I too love you
Then why is my luck
Different from Godliness.

Eleven Flowers on the Grave of Mahjur

The new flowers are out
But their lover is no more, alas!
The flower-garden of hope
Has lost its song-bird
Who wielded his sweet pen
And wrote verses surpassing the notes of the Oriole.
Indebted to you is our mother-tongue
Like the lotus flower to the sun
Your song of thunder
Awakened us out of slumber
Imparting new life and hope
That make the dead alive
We need no paradise now
But our motherland
So I cover thy grave with flowers
I brought, O sweet song bird,
The lover of flowers, *Mahjur*
Who joined his Friend again
This day in 1371 A.H.

Hymn to Love

Great Love,
Thy Power is marvellous as God's

Thou art my God
Enshrine my heart
To worship thee
The essence of form and colour
Through my eyes
And vintage of sound and song
Through my ears
Shall fill thy cups.
Thou smilest at me
From distant heights
Contained in heroic tales
The distance I cannot bear
In deep pits of the earth
I love
Help me, O Lord!
To pull down the walls of exclusiveness
under the laws of *Karma*.
Thou the moth
And I the lamp
To sacrifice my life for Thee
And attain the glorious end.
And thy lofty feet
I am the black bee
Restless on thorns
Sustaining thy hope
I cultivate the field of my life
Sow tears and reap pearls
In my own eyes
To adorn thy sandal
With Joy
Streams of religion flow
Within their narrow banks
Gathering impurities
Like the priests and books
Make me drink at the source.
Thou the source of light

My own true self
Initiate me to at-one-ment
Remover of the world's darkness
Make me shun the duality.

Come, My Guide

Come, my guide
Be kind to me
Stunned am I in the path
Difficult and uncertain
Caged in this bodily frame
I pine to soar
But in vain
When the wings are no more.
I forgot the very first letter
Of Truth and now
Grant me wisdom to know
And come.
Wisdom helps East
To reach the goal
But the West still harps
On matter and its pleasures.
You are sacred and real
To adorn a home.
Be its glory
And its ornaments.
Having heard man
Numbed with gratitude

Away from pleasure
Come, now come.
You promised my salvation
In the beginning
Fulfil that promise
And come.
No worldly riches I want
To burden my soul
Entrusting all to you
Now come.

A Prayer

1. Thou, Lord, transcendest space and yet doth shine
 In every mote in it Thou art what's known
 And what is not—The life and form of both
2. From Thee arose existence at the dawn
 Of time; in Thee at last 'twill come to end;
 What is has been made patent by Thy will;
 What's vanished is but treasured up in Thee.
3. Thy wisdom shows itself in Nature's laws
 The way a body's tissues are composed
 The order of the minute cells in these,
 Are things we marvel at but cannot know.
4. Look where he will in Nature's floral world,
 The man who truly sees will find distinct
 On every petal marks Thy pencil left
 O Painter, of Thy great and good design.
5. From Thee, the sun of beauty, just one mote
 To Nature given becomes the countless hues

Of flowers and their fragrance sweet as well
As songs of *bulbuls*, whose delight they are.
6. Thy will is Evolution's law, whose goal
Is perfect Man—the ladder has its rungs
From lowest planes right up to highest Heaven.
7. If joys and sorrows in this world do seem
Unequally given, Thy purpose is,
No doubt, to test our faith and fortitude,
Or sympathy for our less happy friends.
8. Not even the Vedas dare describe in words
What Thou in Thyself art; and Reason is
In wonder lost at Thy first attribute.
9. O Lord adored and sought in every clime
By every faith, Thou are to man the truth,
To Yog its ecstasy, to Budh Nirvan
The selfless self—to Vedant Thou art Brahm.
10. Grant us the will to walk in wisdom's way,
And make dear India Thy temple where
All men, all faiths, unite to worship Thee.
11. Lead us, O Lord, from darkness unto light;
From what is false and fleeting unto truth,
And guide our erring feet from moral death
To everlasting life in Thee—Amen!

Token of Love

His rosary of love
I lost
I took no care

So unworthy I am!
A blindman's search can never help
The precious heads are lost
Only those who give rich gifts to the poor
In previous life can gather these.
I blame myself (for making a show of beads)
Which should have been hidden
And treasured in the heart.
Show not thy treasure of love
Lest you lose it,
Seest not thou, the utensils with cover
Help food to perfect cooking
The token of love is lost
And I am out of wits
And roam from shop to shop
But neither beg nor buy.
How can I tell him
My state of thoughtlessness
Or, disturb him in the night
When all eyes are looking in the day.
Cling on to faith and hope
Some one may get yet another token
His treasury is full of them
This thou may know.
In hills and woods
In gardens, flowers and stars
His countless tokens shine
As scintillating signs.
Thoughtless thus
With balance lost and fallen
How dare we face him
And offer a lame excuse for devotion.
Agreed that we withdraw
Will his love let us go?
The eternal bond of soul and God
Is not fragile like children's friendship.

To the repentant and the humble
He shows affection
With the clever he pretends to be angry
Ask of Sudama[1]
Whom he accepted with love.
The all-knowing innocent child
Is close to behind Surdas[2]
Quietly listening to his songs
Of loving devotion.

1. A close friend of Lord Krishna at his school
2. A devotional poet.

Notes and References

SAINTLINESS has been a rigid tradition with the early poets in Kashmir. These saint-poets used poetry as a means to express their quest of Truth. It was so with Abhinavagupta and other philosopher-poets who followed him. Zinda Kaul may, perhaps, be the last of the barons in this line. Literature, therefore, had no priority except for its divine wisdom.

Sanskrit was the language of the early inhabitants but with the dawn of *Prākrit* in the thirteenth century the philosophic tradition continued and little attention was given to preserve the spoken word except for its philosophic thought and divine appeal. What is more, vernaculars received very little recognition and were not, therefore, preserved. Thus much mist arose round what was true and original creating a difficult problem for the researcher.

In Kashmiri the problem became much more vexed as this language vacillated between Sanskrit as its base and Persian which erected its sweet structure on it. This process of mingling had also some influence of other central Asian languages and dialects.

With the system of English education which began towards the end of the last century Kashmir was left open to

the visitors and tourists. Tourists came from other parts of the world and visitors from the parched plains of India to enjoy cool and salubrious climate of Kashmir. Indigenous talent took to the reading and writing of English. Those of the people who could read and write English had a definite advantage over others who only knew Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic and Urdu.

1. Zinda Kaul was fortunate to have a thorough knowledge of English language. From the very beginning of the century he began writing in English and later translated the well-known devotional poet Parmānand.

2. Zinda Kaul's own notes in Persian, Urdu, Hindi and Kashmiri, though not systematic, give an idea of his field of study and interest.

3. A small collection of books (Emerson, Victor Hugo, Bhagwandas, Radhakrishnan, Ghalib, Rumi, translation of the *Gita*, Upanishads, Will Durant, Nehru's *Discovery of India*) have footnotes in his own handwriting. Small pieces of paper between pages have also notes in his own hand.

4. Zinda Kaul's letters to friends, students and relatives (collected by the author) throw some light on his relationship with people

5. Zinda Kaul wrote blank-verse in English. Professor J.L. Kaul was told that it was without any flaw. Shri T.C. Wazir remembers (in his unpublished autobiography) having copied some of Zina Kaul's poems in blank-verse from the walls of the *Hamām* of late Shyam Sunder Lal Dhar.

6. "The Reading Club", Sri Pratap College, Srinagar, 1933, was founded by Professor J.L. Kaul. He encouraged writings on Kashmiri poets when attempts were also made at translations. Zinda Kaul figured as a devotional poet in discussion. Earlier poets in Kashmiri were also studied and the Kashmiri section in the *Pratap*, the college magazine, was also begun by Professor J.L. Kaul. Professor Sri Kanth Toshkhani, who knows everything about Kashmiri, delivered talks on this language to show its richness. Thus began a period of

study in Kashmiri. *The Kashmiri Lyrics* by J.L. Kaul, termed a fine book by Zinda Kaul, was the eye-opener for all. The rendering into English widened the field of study in Kashmiri verse.

7. The first paper in English on "Zinda Kaul—A Study" by A.N. Raina appeared in the *Lalla Rookh*, Srinagar, 1952. This biographical sketch created interest in the works of the poet. The radio talks on Zinda Kaul's poetry were helpful in knowing the poet. The Sahitya Akademi Award for Kashmiri in 1964 brought him to forefront where his clear and loud voice created an impression. In every *Mushāira*, his simple language and pronunciation won him applause but his failing health restricted his movement. Fortunately for Zinda Kaul, a close friend of his, Pandit Sat Lal Dhar, charmed audiences by singing his poems.

The *Deewan-i-Sābit*, Urdu and Persian poems of Zinda Kaul, edited by A.N. Raina, were examined by Josh Malihābādi and other noted Urdu scholars who were of the view that the language had too much of 'regional colour' but it was worth publishing. The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Culture and Languages financed this publication. Some of the poems had already appeared in the *Vitastā*, the first daily newspaper of Kashmir edited by Shri Prem Nath Bazaz, the well-known author of some valuable books on Kashmir.

Sheerazā, the journal of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Language, has also some articles by different authors written on the poetry and genius of Zinda Kaul.

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